

REMARKS

The Office Action of May 31, 2005 has been received in its contents carefully considered.

The Drawings:

The drawing objections in sections 4 and 5 of the Office Action are respectfully traversed, as discussed below.

Section 4 of the Office Action, which imposes an objection under 37 CFR 1.84(a), comments that the specification discloses storing a wide array of information within a database, but Figure 13 only discloses storing coordinates. However, what 37 CFR 1.84(a) says it is that drawings are required if they are necessary for an understanding of the subject matter sought to be patented. The present application already has more than 50 drawing figures, and the invention is discussed in a lengthy specification. It is respectfully submitted that the original drawings and text of this application are sufficient to impart an understanding of the subject matter sought to be patented, so that no further drawings are "necessary for an understanding of the subject matter sought to be patented" in accordance with 37 CFR 1.84(a).

Section 5 of the Office Action cites MPEP 608.02(d) for the proposition that any structural detail that is essential for proper understanding of the invention should be shown in the drawings, and then comments that various Figures lack reference numbers. The mere presence of Figures without reference numbers, though, does not imply that the drawings are deficient in structural detail that is essential for properly understanding the invention. Reference numbers in the drawings of a patent application are frequently beneficial if they can be used in the text to help describe an invention, but on the other

hand there are many occasions when a drawing alone is sufficient and reference numbers would only be an encumbrance. It is respectfully submitted that Figures 13, 27, 40, 42, 53-54, and 57 and the present application are satisfactory without reference numbers. Indeed, it is difficult to envision what items in Figure 42 (for example) should be marked with reference numbers, and what changes would be needed in the text in view of the added reference numbers.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the drawing objections should be withdrawn.

The Claim Revisions:

The present Amendment cancels the claims that have been withdrawn from consideration in this application. It also revises most of the remaining claims. In these claim revisions, the antecedent basis issues identified in section 8 of the Office Action have been addressed, so it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1, 20, 56, and 58 should be withdrawn.

However, the rejection of claims 3 and 49 for indefiniteness, in section 9 of the Office Action, is respectfully traversed. "Synthesizes" and "perceivable" are not relative terms. Relative terms are expressions such as "large" (how big does something need to be in order to be considered "large?").

The Rejections On The Prior Art:

Section 11 of the Office Action rejects independent claims 1, 19, 48, and 58 (along with various dependent claims) for anticipation by Ernst ("Using Netscape"). For the reasons discussed below, however, it is respectfully submitted that these claims (and thus also their dependent claims) are patentable over the reference.

Independent claim 1 provides that an "original image holding device" holds "first image data." Claim 1 also provides that a computer communicates with the original image holding device, and comprises "a storing device for storing second image data corresponding to said first image data...". Claim 1 then recites, "wherein said computer ... detects alterations to said second image data read out from said storing device." On page 5, the Office Action draws attention to pages 50-51 of Ernst and comments that the user can turn off inline images, whereupon original image data will then be converted to an inline image icon. However, it is respectfully submitted that turning off inline images has nothing to do with detecting alterations to image data with a computer.

Claim 1 also recites that, "if an alteration to said second image data read out from said storing device is detected, said computer additionally requests said original image holding device to transfer said first image data." On page 5, the Office Action refers to Ernst's "Load Images" command. This command, though, has nothing to do with requesting first image data if an alteration is detected in second image data.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Ernst neither discloses nor suggests the invention recited in claim 1. The rejection of claim 1 should therefore be withdrawn. Independent claim 58 provides that first image data is requested if an alteration in second image data is detected. Claim 58 is therefore also patentable over the reference.

Independent claim 19 provides that an "image registration terminal device" comprises "a first screen display section capable of displaying ... set-regions specified as prospective non-disclosure regions within an image data region...", with image data and setting-data for the set-regions being stored in a server. Claim 19 also provides that a "reading terminal device" comprises "a second input section" that reads out the image data

and setting-data from the server, along with a “region deciding section for deciding disclosure decided regions in said image data region and non-disclosure decided regions in said image data region with respect to said setting-data,” and a “second screen display section” that displays the image data, set-regions, and non-disclosure decided regions. Such an arrangement has the advantage that is mentioned (for example) in the passage at page 153 of the present application, line 23 to page 154, line 4.

In contrast to claim 19, Ernst has no function of managing image data and the regions corresponding to image data. That is, Ernst neither discloses nor suggests specifying set-regions as prospective non-disclosure regions of a document, storing setting-data for such set-regions in a server along with image data, and then displaying the image data, set-regions, and non-disclosure decided regions within the image data according to the setting-data.

Independent claim 48 also provides that set-regions are specified as prospective non-disclosure regions, that a server stores image data and setting-data for the set-regions, and that a second screen display section displays image data, set-regions, and non-disclosure decided regions. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 48 is patentable over Ernst for reasons along the lines discussed above with respect to claim 19.

The remaining claims that have been rejected depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitation to further define the invention, so they are patentable along with their independent claims and need not be further discussed.

Conclusion:

For the foregoing reasons it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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